

2004 Environment and Conservation Stewardship Award Winners

Governor's Greenways and Trails Stewardship Award (Individual)

William Fronk was among the first to respond to the call for volunteers when construction began on the trail system at Hamilton County Shackleford Ridge Park on Signal Mountain. Among his many contributions, Mr. Fronk helped lay out and mark proposed routes, as well as participate in trail construction. He assisted in the design of 15 bridges, determined necessary materials, located supplies and transported materials. He also designed and installed kiosks, including the meticulous details of installing trail maps. Additionally, Mr. Fronk has also provided valuable voluntary services in areas such as coordinating with Eagle Scouts in planning service projects to include construction on the trail. Mr. Fronk's willingness to dedicate his skills, expertise and time has benefited the Shackleford Ridge trail system, visitors and the citizens of Hamilton County.

Governor's Greenways and Trails Stewardship Award

Panther Creek State Park and Morristown/Hamblen Keep America Beautiful has initiated several projects over the past two years to educate the public about environmental and conservation issues. Panther Creek offers environmental education opportunities for the students of Hamblen and Jefferson counties, including the importance of conserving our natural resources and the benefits of recycling.

With a Clean Streams grant from the Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency, Panther Creek has helped educate the public on water quality issues and worked to create a litter-free watershed at the park. A stream cleanup hosted by the park included 40 volunteers who collected 2,000 lbs. of litter. The grant also helped purchase water quality testing equipment and materials for use by local schools. These hands-on educational opportunities help students understand the factors that affect water quality and the organisms that depend on clean streams.

A self-guided interpretive nature trail, constructed through a unique partnership with Morristown-Hamblen Keep America Beautiful Systems, educates the public on recycling and the natural history of the trail. An additional grant will allow this partnership to establish a composting area in the park that will reduce landfill waste, provide compost for use on park grounds and provide an educational opportunity for local students and park visitors.

Governor's Greenways and Trails Stewardship Award (Local Community)

The Town of Erwin, Unicoi County, is to be commended for its significant role and contribution to the development of the North Indian Creek Greenway. Although the project is primarily funded by TDOT Federal Surface Transportation Program funds, a minimum of 20 percent must come from other sources. The Erwin linear park will help ensure, protect and enhance the scenic beauty of one of the most beautiful watershed views in Tennessee. The town's consultant, Tysinger, Hampton and Partners, is also to be commended for designing a project that protects environmentally sensitive wetlands and streams. The Park runs parallel to I-26 along North Indian Creek and other waterways. Four miles of the planned 12-mile greenway/trail were completed in 2003. The entire project, which begins in Erwin, loops through the town of Unicoi, connects with the Appalachian Trail in Cherokee National Forest and continues on to Iron Mountain, is slated for completion in 2004. The Erwin park offers lighting from dusk till dawn, restrooms, benches, docks for fishing and a family-friendly atmosphere. Erwin Street Department employees maintain and repair all facilities, including the wooden wetland bridges, paved trails, grounds, creek banks and woodlands along the trail.

Governor's Award for Excellence in Hazardous Waste Management

Fort Campbell Military Installation has earned the 2004 Governor's Award for Excellence in Hazardous Waste Management because of its outstanding leadership in reducing or eliminating hazardous wastes from base operations. Through the Pollution Prevention Operation Center, Fort Campbell conducts a comprehensive, self-sustaining hazardous material management and recycling program, which diverts hazardous materials from disposal as hazardous wastes. Additionally, this program allows Fort Campbell to use "greener" alternatives through the use of recycled products, such as antifreeze and parts washer solvent. Through this program, Fort Campbell personnel have reduced hazardous waste disposal quantities and related costs by more than 80 percent since 1992. In total, Fort Campbell saves more than \$500,000 per year by preventing pollution. Fort Campbell sustains these environmental practices through an extensive Environmental Quality Officers Course, which tracks and trains over 200 appointed Environmental Quality Officers. Program graduates are responsible for training those within their unit or activity. The effects of these integrated training efforts reach beyond the local community as military personnel rotate to and from the base.

Robert Sparks Walker Lifetime Environmental / Conservation Achievement Award (Professional)

Dr. Jim L. Byford, Dean of the College of Agriculture and Applied Sciences at the University of Tennessee at Martin, has dedicated his service career to teaching landowners, outdoor users and youth how to manage and enjoy the land. His manner of teaching inspires his students to love and respect the land and wildlife. His broad perspective of land management, his conviction to land stewardship and his moderate, common sense approach to the land ethic has attracted national attention. Dr. Byford's approach to land management brings together the agricultural community, forestry interests, as well as wildlife and fisheries advocates. Since being named Conservationist of the Year by the Tennessee Conservation League in 1982, Dr. Byford has received numerous state and national awards for his work, particularly for his conservation education work with youth. Over the last 20 years, he has given 57 invited presentations in 24 states, Ecuador and Japan. Dr. Byford's widely respected book, "Close to the Land," was published in 1999 and his monthly outdoor column appears in the Southeast Farm Press.

Robert Sparks Walker Lifetime Environmental / Conservation Achievement Award (Volunteer)

Ann Tidwell has been an effective, relentless advocate for Tennessee's free-flowing streams, environmentally healthy watersheds and environmentally sensitive outdoor recreation for nearly 40 years. As a founding member of the Tennessee Scenic Rivers Association and a founding member of the Friends of Radnor Lake, Ann quickly established a lifelong career of protecting our natural resources. She chaired the Governor's Commission on Tennesseans Outdoors and has been appointed by several governors to special task forces and an environmental regulatory board. An enthusiastic supporter of greenway corridors and recreational trails, Ann became chairman of the newly formed Metro-Nashville Greenway Commission in 1993, a post that she continues to hold today. As a board member of the Tennessee Parks and Greenways Association, Ann led the effort to give small grants to local groups to spur the development of local greenways in smaller communities. Her tireless efforts have constantly promoted a strong conservation ethic among the public, the business community and government leaders and have forged many paths for citizen involvement in environmental protection and conservation issues.

Agriculture / Forestry Stewardship Award

John P. Davis, Jr., Blount County. The John Davis farm, located in the Foothills of the Great Smoky Mountains, lies in the Ellejoy Creek watershed, which is a major source of drinking water to the citizens of Blount County. Improving and protecting water quality is at the forefront of John Davis's conservation practices. To prevent sediment and other pollutants from entering Ellejoy Creek, Mr. Davis has installed stream crossings, a heavy-use area feeding pad, alternative watering systems, and is restricting livestock access to Ellejoy Creek. He is developing a wildlife habitat plan and implementing a Management Intensive Grazing Program. Mr. Davis has been instrumental in getting other landowners to join him in adopting and implementing practices to protect water quality in the watershed.

Citizens Aquatic Resource Preservation Award

The Harpeth River Watershed Association, Middle Tennessee, is dedicated to protecting and restoring the ecological health of the entire Harpeth River. This multi-county partnership includes hundreds of supporters that include local government officials, concerned citizens, farmers, business leaders, community leaders and others. The River Restoration Program addresses the problem of stream bank erosion, demonstrates different approaches to improve water quality, and helps implement a range of best management practices in partnership with cities and local landowners.

Citizens Aquatic Resource Preservation Award

Little River Watershed Association in Blount County promotes educational activities that benefit the river and the watershed, distributes current information to the community and assists citizens in taking positive action. During 2003, the Association's first full year of operation, the LRWA planting 2,000 native trees to stabilize stream banks, removed 5 tons of litter from streams, visited 17 schools and took nearly 1,000 children to the creek to learn about water quality, provided water quality classes to 300 adults, and visited 10 locations with a traveling multi-media kiosk.

Scientific Aquatic Resource Preservation Award

The Nature Conservancy and Partners Hatchie River Project, West Tennessee. This partnership between The Nature Conservancy, state and federal agencies, county governments and local landowners addresses erosion and sediment in the Hatchie watershed. The Hatchie River is one of just a few rivers in Tennessee that has not been channelized and the natural flow of the river remains unchanged. Under the leadership of The Nature Conservancy and with the cooperation of local landowners, the partnership is restoring deep, eroding river channel in Richland Creek to its natural state. The partnership is also designing erosion control measures and exploring other conservation measures within the Dry Creek watershed.

Civic Volunteer Award

Jerry Wilde was an unwavering advocate for the clean up of the Pigeon River, which is perhaps the single-most controversial water issue in Tennessee history. The Dead Pigeon River Council has been a major factor in representing the local community over many years. In his role as president of the Dead Pigeon River Council, Mr. Wilde attended many long, difficult meetings and studied vast volumes of materials on his own time. Under his leadership, the community has witnessed the Pigeon River's recovery from decades of pollution to a now-thriving recreation industry.

Civic Volunteer Award

The Dyer County Association of Tennessee Master Gardeners educates the community while undertaking numerous environmental and beautification projects. These avid gardeners volunteer their time and talents to teach youth and adults not only about gardening, but also our connection with the environment. They host educational seminars, encourage citizens to create a place for wildlife, develop and maintain public gardens, participate in litter pickups, lead Arbor Day projects, and teach others how to care for trees and vegetation.

Industrial Pollution Prevention Award

Tennessee Koyo Steering Systems Co. in Monroe County and its 800 employees produce rack and pinion steering systems for vehicle manufacturers. TKS works to reduce and / or eliminate its landfill waste through active, hands-on involvement in the community, by raising employee awareness, and by total management commitment to minimize waste and environmental impacts of its operations. To ensure awareness and demonstrate commitment, recycling is part of the company's goal sharing (bonus) plan for all employees. This year, TKS expects to save \$25,000 in landfill charges and to gain \$7,000 from materials recycled. This income is given to the Employee Activity Team, which provides funding for employee activities, community donations and activities to assist families in need. TKS has done an exceptional job of fostering a cultural change within the work place and in employee attitudes. TKS is a Tennessee Pollution Prevention Partner and is working to achieve Performer level status. The company, which is also ISO 14000 certified, is fully committed to continually improving its environmental performance.

Local Government Stewardship Award

Fort Campbell Military Installation has established a reputation for comprehensive environmental leadership on the base and in the surrounding communities, both in Tennessee and in Kentucky. The Pollution Prevention Branch of the Public Works Business Center is the dynamic hub of Fort Campbell's stewardship success, operating an exceptional education and outreach program that serves base operations and the surrounding counties. The Pollution Prevention Branch actively practices what it teaches through a mandatory residential and office recycling policy, an aggressive construction and demolition waste diversion initiative, as well as a comprehensive hazardous material management and recycling program. Fort Campbell's solid waste and recycling programs keep thousands of tons of waste out of landfills each year and saves thousands of dollars throughout the Installation. The Restoration Advisory Board involves and educates citizens on risk assessment, local geology and regulatory requirements, and provides a forum for community problem solving.

Local Government Stewardship Award

Panther Creek State Park offers environmental education opportunities for the students of Hamblen and Jefferson counties, including the importance of conserving our natural resources and the benefits of recycling. With a Clean Streams grant from the Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency, Panther Creek has helped educate the public on water quality issues and worked to create a litter-free watershed at the park. The grant also helped purchase water quality testing equipment and materials for use by local schools to help students understand the factors that affect water quality and the organisms that depend on clean streams. A self-guided interpretive nature trail, constructed through a unique partnership with Morristown-Hamblen Keep America Beautiful Systems, educates the public on recycling and the natural history of the trail. An additional grant will allow this partnership to establish a composting area in the park that will reduce landfill waste, provide compost for use on park grounds and provide an educational opportunity for local students and park visitors.

Natural Heritage Conservation Award

Coffee County Joint Industrial Park. The industrial park, located between Manchester and Tullahoma, is an integral component of an overall strategic effort for industrial recruitment to the area. More than 7 acres of environmentally sensitive wetlands lie within the park boundaries. Instead of seeking permits to develop these wetland areas, the joint park committee elected to redesign the park to avoid the wetlands and 17 acres of adjacent buffer zones. The entire 24.7-acre protected area will be encumbered with a deed of restriction or conservation easement that prohibits future development or disturbance.

Service Industry / Business Stewardship Award

5R Processors, Ltd., in Clinton converts end-of-life electronics into commodity streams for further recycling. 5R has distinguished its operations as a premier processor in the Southeast and has moved forward to develop its Tennessee operations as flagship service centers and triage facilities. The 5R system of service processes over 14,000 pounds of electronics per hour. No portion of the end-of-life electronics is landfilled, thereby diverting more than 30 million pounds of electronics waste annually from our landfills. In 2003, 5R partnered with Knox County to further develop electronic collection events for the general public, and partnering efforts with Goodwill Industries provide affordable hardware and refurbished electronic devices to low-income families.

Service Industry / Business Stewardship Award

Valley Proteins, Inc., Knoxville Division, takes environmental stewardship very seriously, as evidenced by its Declaration of Environmental Commitment and its corporate actions to instill environmental values in employees and its processes. Through policy and procedure, Valley Proteins holds its associates responsible for environmental compliance. Each employee is trained to ensure an understanding of the environmental issues associated with the job or task. The company has also invested in advanced technologies to improve efficiency, reduce waste and protect the environment. Valley Proteins, Inc., has well demonstrated its long-term commitment to a cleaner environment.

Tennessee Energy Leadership Award

Delta Faucet Company of Jackson instituted a program in 2003 to reduce its overall energy consumption, which has resulted in tremendous cost savings to the company, while maintaining a high-quality product and reducing environmental impacts. Delta is replacing all fluorescent light bulbs with bulbs that reduce energy use and disposal costs, feature reduced mercury content, and improve lighting. However, the company's greatest achievement results from process changes that reduced energy usage in the machining department's degreasing operation. These process changes resulted in a 54 percent savings from its energy usage in 2002. Additionally, these process changes created a cost savings of \$2,000 per month in chemical purchases. Delta Faucet Company is the fourth Tennessee industry to meet all criteria as a Tennessee Pollution Prevention Partnership (TP3) Performer, and it is the first Tennessee industry to be both a TP3 Partner and a member of EPA's Performance Track.

Tennessee Energy Leadership Award

Memphis Light, Gas and Water is the nation's largest three-utility service provider with more than 415,000 customers in Memphis and Shelby County. In 2003, MLGW launched an active campaign to increase public awareness through education about wise energy use, energy efficiency and conservation. Within its organization, MLGW educates employees about conserving energy at work and at home. The EcoWise Smart Tips Program encourages employees to share innovative tips on ways the company can use energy wisely while protecting the environment. MLGW also promotes and invests in advanced renewable and alternative energy technologies, such as fuel cell technology and alternative and clean fuel vehicles. The utility also walks the talk by implementing energy efficiency improvements in company facilities and in its water production facilities.